

# Hillandale

## News

No 193 August 1993





*A G&T monarch No. 7 travelling-arm gramophone. Estimate : £800-£900*

*A G&T record storage drawers. Estimate L £500-£700*

# MECHANICAL MUSIC

Tuesday 31 August 1993

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# Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

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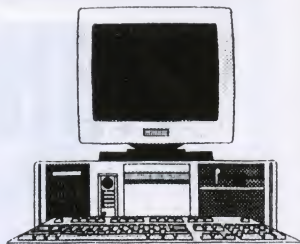
**Issue Number 193, August 1993**

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**Front cover illustration:** Kathleen Darby our second patron  
(Thanks to Peter Adamson for the photograph)

## EDITOR'S DESK



### Unusual machines

My thanks go to Frank Andrews for revealing the story of such an unusual machine as the *Continuous Gramophone*.

Very few of them could have been sold as their price was very high (more than a year's wage for the average worker of the time) and their mechanism was rather complicated and repairs would have been expensive. Much the same arguments apply to the HMV Automatic No.1 and its derivatives. I feel that if any of our readers have any uncommon machines, they could do a great service to the rest of us collectors, who may know nothing of these machines, by writing articles on them or commissioning someone else to write something on their behalf. *Hillandale News* is the ideal medium for these details to be published in and to preserve the information for future generations before it gets lost in the mists of time.

### Annual General Meeting

I would remind all members that the Annual General Meeting of the Society takes place at St. Matthews Church Hall, Wolverhampton on Saturday 25th September 1993 at 2.30pm. It is being hosted by the Midlands Group, who are providing a full day of attractions. All are welcome. For full details see the notice on page 294.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **October** issue will be **15th August 1993**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

# THE EDISON ELECTRIC LIGHT STATION AT HOLBORN VIADUCT 1882-1884

by George Frow

**A**lthough this is not a feature about phonographs, the setting-up of London's first electric light generating station came at a significant time in Edison's career, and is a story that may not be widely known, especially by those who know the area. An absorbing account is in the pages of Francis Jehl's *Menlo Park Reminiscences*, and has been quoted variously by those writing on Edison's electrical generating progress, as it is here, and the writer would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of the Illinois collector and enthusiast John Fesler, and wishes there had been space to include all his electrical calculations of this enterprising installation.

There had been a lively Edison presence in London several years before the Tin Foil Phonograph was sent over in 1878 and exhibited by Preece and others during that year. Thomas Edison had arrived in Great Britain in 1873 to demonstrate his telegraph system to the Post Office. Colonel Gouraud represented Edison interests in an office in Telegraph Street, off Moorgate, and later The Edison Telegraph Company was set up at 11 Queen Victoria Street, also in the City by Edward H. Johnson, Edison's manager in this country.<sup>1</sup> In 1881 Johnson was instructed by Edison to demonstrate to the English public the Edison system of central station delivery.

For this purpose an empty property was rented at 57 Holborn Viaduct and was opened on January 12th 1882, supplying a current to a number of buildings within a quarter of a mile either side and was an immediate precursor of the larger New York system at Pearl Street that started operations in the following September. The Holborn Viaduct enterprise acted as a test-bed for experience and was expected to attract widespread attention and investment for similar installations, but from the start was never intended to be anything but an experiment of a temporary nature.

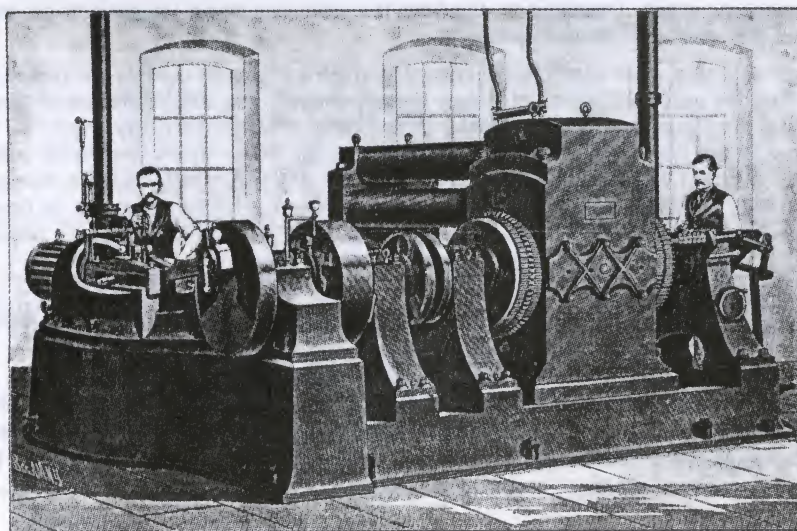
The first occasion when the Edison generating system was seen outside the United States was when the earliest 'Jumbo', or C type dynamo, with Charles Batchelor supervising was shown at the Paris Exposition of 1881, lighting over 1,000 lamps every day.<sup>2</sup> The 27 ton Jumbo was the first Edison dynamo connected directly to the steam drive shaft instead of having the power-wasting separate belt-driven units. At the Exposition's close this dynamo was moved to Edison's French factory and contracts for lighting systems in Paris and Milan were started. In its day the Jumbo was described as "one of the seven wonders of the world", but so were many scientific artifacts of the period.

From London the English Edison Electric Company Ltd.<sup>3</sup> ordered Jumbo No.2 built at Edison's Machine Works at Goerck Street, New York. This was brought over and installed at 57, Holborn Viaduct. The equipment was even more bulky than the first, and with a Porter-Allen steam engine had a capacity of 1,200 lamps at 100-103 volts DC.<sup>4</sup> As his right-hand man Johnson had engineer William J. Hammer of the Menlo Park team, and three other Edison employees to help supervise the setting-up of the generator and mains cables. These were Hood, a steam engineer, Holloway a mechanic and Patterson to lead





Holborn Viaduct, 1882. No.57 is to the right of centre with the double blind



Jumbo Dynamo at the Paris Electrical Exhibition, 1881

a team who placed the conducting cables into position. From accounts of the day they had little opinion of the quality of the locally-enlisted labour!

While this station was being built Hammer was also supervising the installation of Edison dynamos at the Crystal Palace Electrical Exhibition in South London. For this exhibit it would appear unlikely that a spare Jumbo was yet ready, and a shafting and belt system to drive 12 'Z' type dynamos was set up from a steam engine.<sup>5</sup> It ran from mid-January 1882 to June of that year.

The site at Holborn Viaduct was picked for a specific reason. At this point near the perimeter of the City of London the old valley of the Fleet river was crossed by a viaduct 1,400 feet in length and 80 feet wide built in 1867-69 and including an iron bridge of 107 feet span over Farringdon Street.<sup>6</sup> The laws of day permitted only the gas companies to lay pipes for lighting and heating, but due to the viaduct construction mains carrying gas and water to properties were conveyed in tunnels and ducted into each building and the City Sewer Commission allowed the cables to be laid in these, particularly as Johnson made no application for a permanent installation. It was all comparatively cheap and had the company tried elsewhere in London it could have risked a protracted legal fight.

Although readily recognizable with a 90 foot chimney and a 9,000 gallon water tank, the plant at Holborn Viaduct was certainly less ambitious than that on Pearl Street, but it was in operation 8 months earlier, so it may be conceded historically as the first Edison public generating station. An earlier use of incandescent lamps for street lighting in Great Britain had been by Joseph Swan in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1880, and there had been earlier demonstrations of arc lights in public places.

A second Jumbo, driven by an Armington and Sims steam engine was added in April 1882 and coupled in parallel with No.1. A third Jumbo started to run late in 1883, and with an Edison K dynamo the theoretical capacity was raised to 3,850 'A' type lamps. 938 lamps were noted as in use on April 1882 and more were added later, but a machinery reserve for maintenance and repair must have been held. The K dynamo was used for consumers who needed light during the daytime and was driven by its own Armington and Sims engine.

Before and during the time the station was working, the system was watched by Drs. Fleming and Hopkinson, British electrical advisers to The Edison Electric Light Company in Great Britain. In 1883 the latter would develop the improved Edison-Hopkinson generator in Manchester, but in 1881 Edison's were the only generators employed for parallel distribution.

Little information on charges has been found, but early Edison electric consumers bought their current by weight. In March 1882, two months after the station opened the first Edison electrolytic meter arrived and soon others were wired into consumers' systems. The amount of current used was calculated on the weight of a zinc plate in the meter, the more metal deposited the more electricity had been used. The fact that the plate had to be sent away for estimating was resented by some consumers who were pressing for some sort of dial system. The current was estimated in weber-hours, soon changed to ampères. This type of Edison meter remained in use generally for about 10 years.

The Holborn Viaduct station operated for two years; it had proved its point as a practical system and was dismantled in 1884. The first Electric Lighting Act was passed by



Parliament in 1882 giving local authorities powers to buy private generating stations after a period of years thus making trading conditions insecure. No comprehensive urban electricity scheme was installed in Great Britain until the law was amended in 1888, and such ill-thought legislation inhibited an earlier setting-up of a national supply system.

Two types of lamps were used in the Holborn system, 'A' of 16 candlepower and 'B' of half this rating.<sup>7</sup> It extended from Holborn Circus in the west to the General Post Office in the east, a yard or two short of half a mile and was installed in several interesting buildings and in offices of companies that are still nationally known names, even if some are now units of conglomerates. William Preece, the Post Office chief engineer, asked for 400 lamps but accepted 50 in the telegraph room, and the non-conformist City Temple with 150 or so lamps was perhaps the first church anywhere to be lit by electric light. Neither of the established St. Andrew's or St. Sepulchre's churches on Holborn Viaduct would have it, and the nearby Newgate prison had recently ceased to be used for detention and had no wish for it either. From two plans seen the cable did not extend into any side street but serviced only buildings fronting Holborn Viaduct and its street lights.



No. 57 Holborn Viaduct, London, England, where the trial Edison central station was erected in the basement in 1882.



The disposition of the lamps served from 57 Holborn Viaduct on May 20th is as follows:

Streets, Bridge Stair Towers etc.			Lamp types		Total
			A	B	
		1st circuit	66		
		2nd circuit	40		
		3rd circuit	27		
		4th circuit	31		164
1st circuit	No.38	Negretti & Zambra	11		
	38	Sharp & Co.	5		
	41	Vaseline Company	6		
	42	Hodge & Essex	8		
	43/4	Holland & Co.	8		
	45	Steel & Garland	9		
	53	W.D. & H.O.Wills	10		
	55	Terry & Co.	5	4	
	56	J. Buck	12		78
2nd circuit	No.58	H.S.Ward & Co.	11		
	61	Smith & Son	8		
	62	David Hand & Co	3		
	63	Boyle & Co.	9		
	64/5	Jenks & Wood	12		
	69	City Rubber Stamp Co.	6		49
3rd circuit	No.3	Mornington & Western	16		
		Imperial Hotel	16	16	
		London, Chatham & Dover			
		Railway	19		
		Spier's & Pond's Hotel	18		
		Spier's & Pond's			
		Restaurant	20		
	15	Coventry Machine Co.	7		
	18/20	Perry & Co.	24		
	21	Pall Mall Electric Assn.	9		
	22	Meriden Britannia & Co.	5		
		Holborn Land Co.	4		
		Levy & Nephew	8		162
4th circuit		City Temple	147	14	
		Rusher & Son	7	4	172
Central Station (No.57)			216	16	232
Viaduct Tavern			9	22	31
General Post Office			50		50
			Grand Total		938

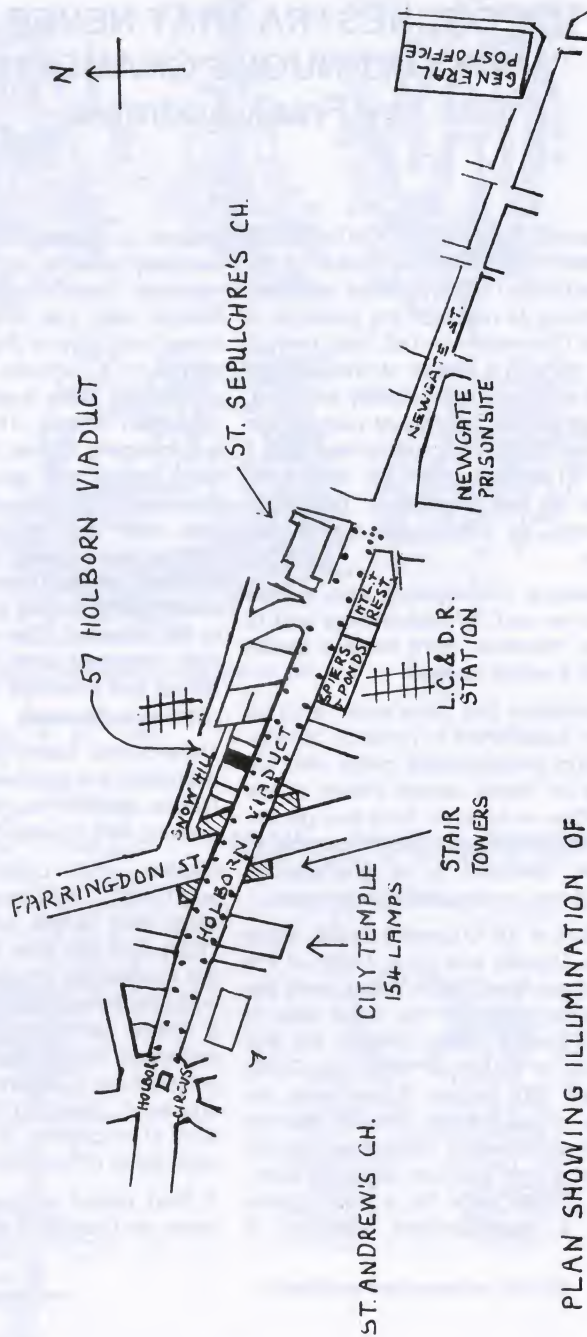
What remains to be seen of this system today? Nothing unfortunately, although signs of dusting in the cellars of the few surviving buildings might still be found. The island site where No.57 stood has been entirely re-built after heavy bombing in the whole area in the last war, and the numbers re-allocated. Three cast iron lamp columns with glass globes stand on either balustrade of the nearby bridge but are likely to be recent reproductions when it was restored, also after the war. The elegant building of the General Post Office still stands, although now known as the Head Post Office. O tempora!

By chance, Edison's concept of a 100 volt DC system persisted in one or two pockets in the City long after the rest of the country in general had 200/250 volts AC. Older members of the Society will recall the 100 volt system that lingered on at our meetings at "The Horse and Groom" in Shoreditch and the restrictions it imposed to having more modern amplifying equipment. While the Society was still meeting there just after 1960 it was converted to the national 240 volts AC.

#### NOTES:

- 1) George Bernard Shaw, later critic and playwright was employed there as a young man to install the telephones. He left a short account in Dyer & Martin's *Edison* 1, 191-2
- 2) Jumbo was the name of Barnum's 12ft high 6½ ton elephant discovered in this year and very much in the public's fancy. By chance the No.1 Dynamo was shipped to Europe in the steamer that had carried the elephant to America and the name stuck.
- 3) Its offices were at 74 Coleman Street, City.
- 4) Rated at 125 normal horsepower with a maximum of 200. It ran at 350 revolutions with steam pressure of 120 p.s.i.
- 5) The Z dynamos were those that were known firstly to Edison electrical staff as Long-legged Mary Anne, then Long-waisted Mary Annes, from their appearance. Edison dynamos were designed by Charles L. Clarke, who retired from the industry in 1932.
- 6) It cost £1,571,000. The Fleet river was put in a culvert under Farringdon Street and flows into the Thames at Blackfriars Bridge.
- 7) The resistance of A lamps was about 120 ohms, the B lamp about half this figure. The A had paper carbon filaments, B lamps bamboo carbon filaments. The K dynamo had a capacity of 250 16-candlepower lamps. At that time candlepower was reckoned on an English spermaceti candle burning at a consumption of 120 grains per hour.





PLAN SHOWING ILLUMINATION OF  
HOLBORN VIADUCT  
BY EDISON ELECTRIC LIGHT SYSTEM  
1881-1882

# THE ORCHESTRA THAT NEVER TIRES "THE CONTINUOUS GRAMOPHONE"

by Frank Andrews

**T**his article about THE CONTINUOUS GRAMOPHONE is the result of an undertaking I gave to fellow member, Ron Armstrong, to research the products of Continuous Gramophones Ltd. after he had presented me with a couple of photographs of a model which he had recently acquired. Members and other readers of past copies of *Hillandale News* may remember that I undertook a similar project for Ron Armstrong after he had acquired a "Duo-Trac" machine with its reel-to-reel sound film recordings.

The Continuous Gramophone was a new product to me and my researching had to commence, therefore, from the two photographs and a patent number.

The first intimation that there would likely be a company established to produce continuously playing gramophones came with the application for Royal Letters Patent at the Patents Office in London, from two gentlemen resident in Australia, for two patents to cover their invention of a gramophone which could play continuously on demand.

W. R. Oyston of 37, O'Connell Street, North Melbourne, Victoria and F. A. Lakin of Pitt Street, Sydney, New South Wales were the two gentlemen down on the other side of the world. Granted patent 304070, the first was applied for in March 1928 (no. 7628) under class 40, section 2 and was for "magazine gramophones, driving starting and stopping tone-arm mounting, sound-box mounting and needles changing automatically". These were for a gramophone by which a predetermined selection of

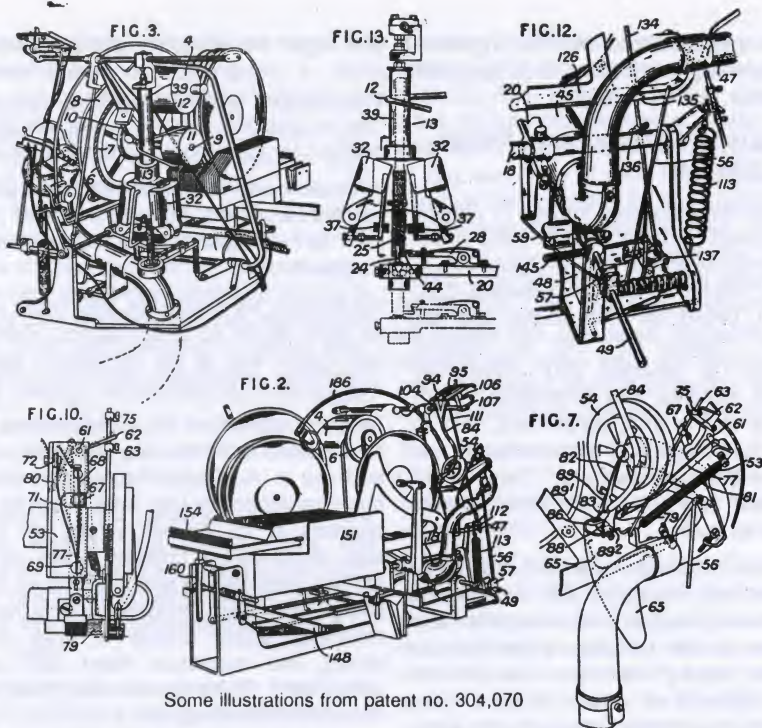
records is played, the records being automatically taken in turn from a magazine and replaced therein after being played. A feature was that the records were positioned vertically in the magazine and were played on a vertically arranged turntable, to which they were transferred by electrically controlled means. The electric circuit was automatically broken at the end of playing each record and was re-established once the record had been replaced in the magazine with the tone-arm and sound-box having been swung back to their starting position. Means were to be provided for enabling the playing of any particular record to be repeated. The needle was automatically changed after the playing of each record and provision made for two kinds of needles to be used.

There were nearly four columns of text describing the mechanisms in the *Illustrated Official Journal of Patents*, plus one page carrying nine illustrations.

Oyston and Lakin's second patent, no.313480, had been applied for at the same time as the first (30208 12th March 1928) and this was for separate cover for the mechanism for changing needles automatically for automatic gramophones, "such a device being of the kind wherein the movement of the sound-box, or reproducer, to and from a playing position controls the automatic changing of the needles". One third of a column of text gave a detailed description of the mechanics involved.

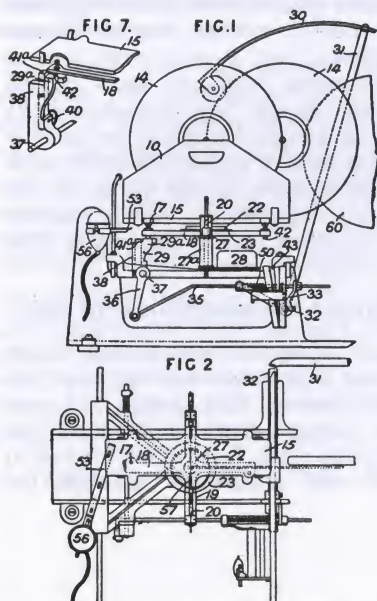
A third patent was applied for by Oyston alone on October 19th 1928 (30389). That





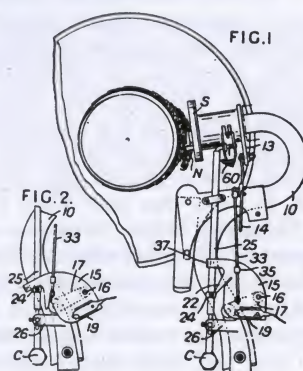
Some illustrations from patent no. 304,070

**312,222. Continuous Gramophones, Ltd.,** (Assignees of Oyston, W. R.). May 22, 1928, [Convention date].



Illustrations from patent no. 312,222

**337,512. Continuous Gramophones, Ltd.,** (Oyston, W. R.). Aug. 26, 1929.



Illustrations from patent no. 337,512

was patent 322052 and was for a gramophone repeating mechanism in a magazine gramophone, and its control.

### **Continous Gramophones Limited reg.no. 234346**

The above company was formed in London and registered on October 26th 1928 under some agreements with W. R. Oyston, F. A. Lakin, M. Brash & Co. (Proprietary) Ltd., and H. D. Brash, all of Australia, and the Dominion Finance Co. Ltd. of London, which was to develop and exploit the inventions, patents and analogous rights, mentioned in the final agreement, and to carry on the business of manufacturing and dealing in gramophones etc. The nominal capitalisation was put at £225,000 in shares of 5 shillings each.

The company thereby secured the rights throughout the world for the "continuous gramophones" except for Australia and New Zealand. The purchase price was put at £85,000 paid by £48,750 in cash with the balance delivered as paid-up shares in the company. The actual issue of the company's shares amounted to £175,000. Working capital was obtained by the creation of £8,000 worth of Debentures.

This new company applied for a fourth patent in March 1929 (7619) as assignees of W. R. Oyston, then with his address given as 16, Fitzgibbons Street, Parkville, Victoria, Australia, and that was granted as 312222. This covered the mechanism wherein vertically arranged disc records were transferred singly from a transversely movable magazine to a vertical turntable, being replaced in the magazine after having played over. In order that both sides of a disc might be played in turn, a means was provided whereby, after one side had been played and the disc returned to the magazine, a half revolution was imparted to the magazine and the disc selected again. After the second side had been played and the

disc again returned, the turntable could be given a transverse movement combined with another semi-revolution of the magazine so that the next disc was brought to a position for transferring to the turntable.

A column and a half of text described the mechanism in the *Illustrated Official Journal of Patents* together with three illustrating diagrams.

Up to now no machines had been offered for sale as far as I can gather. Production was under way at the company's works at Hoe Street, in Walthamstow, London E.17.

Another application for a patent was made by Oyston, still from his Fitzgibbon Street address in Australia, through the Continuous Gramophones Ltd., which had its headquarters at 13, Queen Street, off Cheapside, in the City of London. Given no.23008 on July 26th 1929 it was granted as 303909 which was for "multiple machines, and returning sound boxes to their starting points, the machines fitted with vertical turntables." There was a column and a half of text with two diagrams.

The wholesale factors of long-standing, G. A. Bryan & Co. of Southwark, had been reformed in 1928 as Selecta Gramophones Limited, having its own line of Selecta gramophones and a very short line of Selecta records, made for them by the Parlophone Co. Ltd. This company held its first Annual General Meeting in the summer of 1929, at which it announced it was to be the concessionaires to the trade, for the Continuous Automatic Gramophones, whose proprietors had an address at 235a Regent Street W.1.

### **Continuous Gramophones on Sale**

As far as I can discover, models of the Continuous Gramophones were not put on sale until October 1929, exactly one year after the company had been founded. The occasion was at the Radio Exhibition held in the City Hall, Manchester although the



Continuous Gramophone was on stand 72 in the Tonman Hall.

*The Wireless and Gramophone Trader* had this to say of the event in its October 12th issue: "This firm will be showing their automatic gramophones which play 36 records and change the needle between each. Another great advantage is that the machine will also turn the record round after playing one side, thus enabling complete works to be played without duplicating records. [This was referring to album sets, which did not have automatic sequence coupling of sides. F. A.] Any size of record can be played and in any sequence and the programme can be pre-selected. Any record can be repeated indefinitely.

"Both electric and acoustic models are available and, in the former case, the instrument incorporates a moving coil loud-speaker driven by a higher power amplifier which, of course, runs completely from A.C. or D.C. mains.

"In the case of the acoustic model an ordinary sound-box and tone chamber are employed.

"In all cases the machines are housed in imposing cabinets which can be obtained in oak, mahogany or walnut.

"The prices are 150 guineas for A.C. operation, 140 guineas for D.C. and 85 guineas for the acoustic model.

"We understand that Continuous Gramophones Ltd. are open to appoint sole sales agents for certain Lancashire districts. Their stand will be identified by the sign THE ORCHESTRA THAT NEVER TIRES."

The October 19th issue of *The Wireless and Gramophone Trader* carried a full page spread advertisement from the company itself, headed with the slogan just mentioned. (A reproduction of this advertisement is to be found on page 286)

A review in the same issue, although

repeating much that was written a week earlier, informed the reader that alternatively to the magazine which played 36 discs straight off, there was another magazine which held ten discs and that was used to play each side of each disc in succession and that was intended for such repertoire as complete operas or symphonies, otherwise two sets of records would be required where only one side could be played on a 36 disc run. Only those discs selected need be played with the larger magazine. It was claimed that these were the only machines available which changed needles automatically between the playing of each disc.

The electric models were fitted with a pick-up and the acoustic models had a special sound-box and an exponential sound conduit.

On the stand the demonstration models had glass tops so that visitors could observe the ingenious mechanism in operation. The firm was wishing to appoint agents and welcomed trade enquiries. Traders would be saved a lot of trouble by the fact that all machines would be delivered, installed and serviced by the manufacturers.

"T. S." of *The Gramophone* reported on a model which he had heard through the courtesy the London Agents, Selecta Gramophones Ltd., his remarks appearing in the November 1929 issue.

He covered much the same ground as its contemporary magazine had a month earlier. Two extra points were that the machine selected records either consecutively or intermittently and the adjustment to the size of the record selected was carried out automatically.

The magazine which held 36 discs he described as being fitted with a series of 36 stops corresponding to the position of each disc; the raising of a stop caused the selector mechanism to miss the disc corresponding to that stop.

# THE ORCHESTRA THAT NEVER TIRES FIRST SHOWING IN THE NORTH

This is your first opportunity of hearing and seeing the new Gramophone wonder—the CONTINUOUS GRAMOPHONE. Its uncanny knowledge is positively bewildering. No other instrument has ever been seen or heard before so perfect in its operations, so glorious in its tonal quality, and so obedient to your commands.

Here is the Gramophone unique. All you do is to select your records and switch on—the machine does the rest. It plays the records, every one you have selected, replaces each one after use, changes the needle, and at the end of its allotted task, switches itself off. Its entrancing purity of tone can be modu-

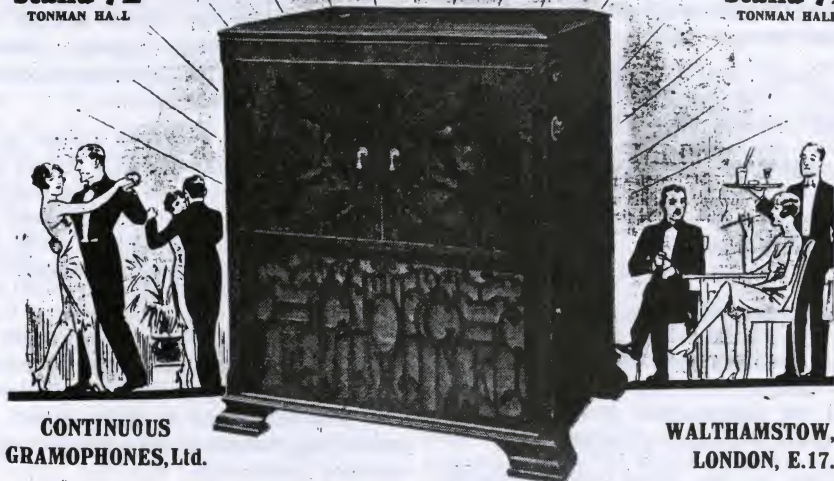
lated from a whisper to cathedral-filling volume. In conjunction with a wireless set, a glorious combination can be effected, giving the best of wireless with the finest of reproduction.

Demonstration daily at the Radio Exhibition where North Country Agencies will be arranged.

**RADIO  
EXHIBITION**  
CITY HALL  
MANCHESTER  
**Stand 72**  
TONMAN HALL

## THE CONTINUOUS GRAMOPHONE

**RADIO  
EXHIBITION**  
CITY HALL  
MANCHESTER  
**Stand 72**  
TONMAN HALL



**CONTINUOUS  
GRAMOPHONES, Ltd.**

**WALTHAMSTOW,  
LONDON, E.17.**



Each of the needle magazines, holding different grades of needles, held 150 needles which could be loaded without discrimination as to which direction the needles were pointing, the correct position being carried out automatically by the magazine's mechanism.

The pick-up arm was between 10" and 12" long from pivot to needle point and was a modified "Woodroffe" to work in conjunction with the needle magazines. The moving coil speaker was a "Brown". The amplifier was a four-stage design with two power valves, in parallel, for the output stage. The quality of reproduction "T. S." reported as being of a "high order".

The acoustic machine was electrically propelled in its mechanisms, and was shown at 86 guineas.

There were two further advertisements for Continuous Gramophones in the November 1929 and December 1929 issues of *The Gramophone*.

There had been a sixth, and last, patent granted to Oyston (who was then back at O'Connell Street, North Melbourne) through the company, no. 337512, which was dated August 26th 1929 and was for an improved means of switching the driving motor on and off. There was one column of text and two diagrams explaining the mechanism of this patent.

On February 11th 1931 a Mr James Kirkpatrick, an accountant, was appointed as a receiver and manager of the company's affairs on behalf of the debenture holder.

On March 16th 1931 a petition for the compulsory winding up of the business was presented to the High Court of Justice by Hutcheson & Co. (Printers) Ltd., of 34, Paternoster Row, London E.C., which was to be dealt with on March 30th at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, W.C.

In the meantime, the March 28th issue of *The Wireless and Gramophone Trader* showed that the company's five-shilling shares were then being quoted at the low price of threepence each.

The Court ordered the winding up of the company on March 30th 1931. Another accountant, W. A. J. Osborne, was appointed to act as the liquidator assisted by a committee of inspection.

A first Meeting of Creditors was held on May 6th in Carey Street, W.C. and another meeting of the contributors to the company was held the same day.

A Statement of Affairs showed a total liability of £10,876 of which £2,852 was expected to rank for a dividend. Assets were estimated to reproduce £98,649, the chief item of assets being £86,940 which was the value placed on the six patents by the directors.

Mr Kirkpatrick, acting on behalf of the bondholders as receiver and manager, gave it as his opinion that any surplus becoming available for the unsecured creditors depended upon whether the patent rights could be sold for a substantial sum. He said the failure of the business was attributable to the considerable technical and management difficulties experienced which led to its working capital being almost entirely absorbed by experiments which had been necessary in order to make and put a reliable machine on the market, and was also due to the acute industrial depression experienced during the previous eighteen months.

Under the compulsory liquidation, the Official Receiver estimated the surplus assets of £96,096. There was a deficiency in relation to shareholders of £74,975.

In its first year of trading the company made a gross profit of £1,420 2s 9d. After charging for expenses this turned into a net loss of £3,798. £8,541 10s 11d, which had

been spent on development and experimental work, was regarded as capital expenditure.

In fact, throughout its trading the business had experienced a gross trading loss of £4,386 19s 10d with the total spent on experiments at £8,675 13s 3d. The Official Receiver thought failure was largely due to

the excessive price paid for the patent rights for a machine still in its experimental stages.

The company's shares were no longer listed in the shares market after June 13th 1931. Thus was the continuity of the Continuous Gramophone broken.



Two photographs of Ron Armstrong's model showing the vertical turntable



# The ORCHESTRA THAT NEVER TIRES!

THE most marvellous invention in music reproduction — the machine that does *all* the work, except select the records. You do that. It is the "Gramophone Robot." See and hear it.

## Music *minus* Work



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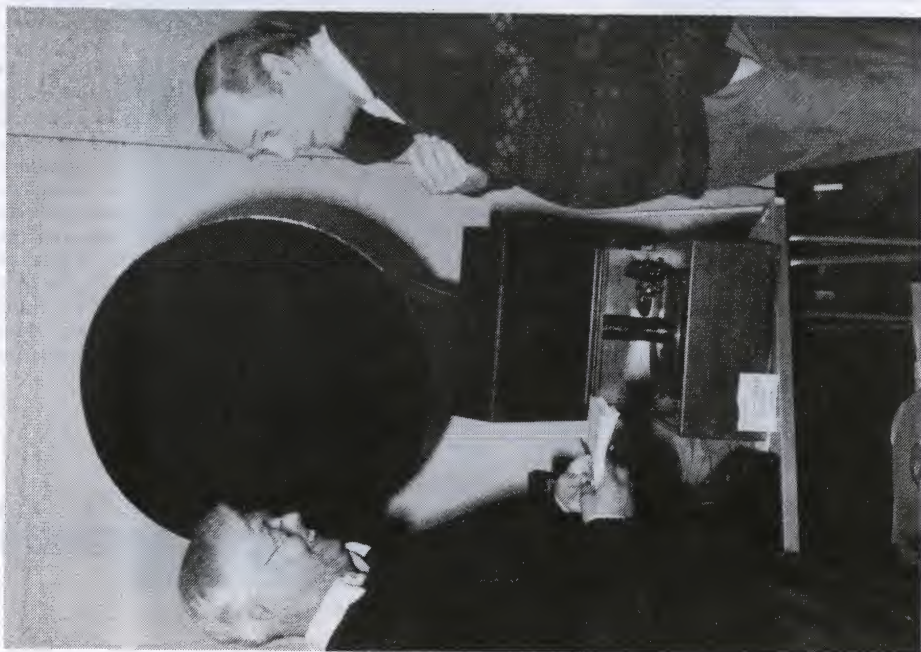


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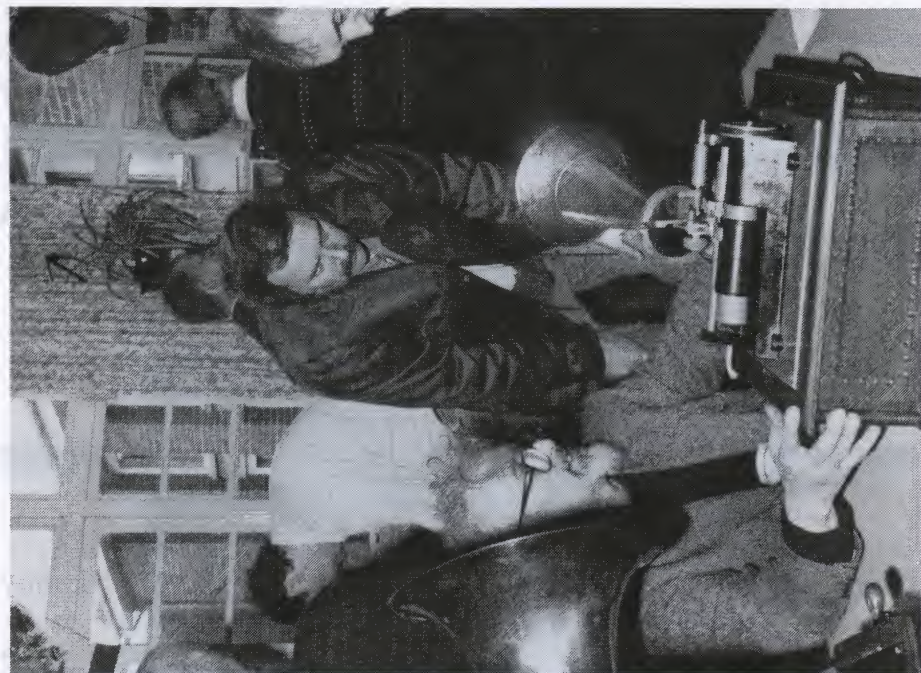
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Chris Hamilton and Don Moore with John Taylor's EMG look-alike



John Gomer demonstrates his Columbia Twentieth-Century Premier Grafonola



## 1993 PHONOFAIR AT NORTHAMPTON

**T**he 1993 C.L.P.G.S. Phonofair was held at Fairfield's School, Trinity Avenue, Northampton on Saturday 24th April. As in previous years it was organised by Ruth Lambert. Her hard work and dedication was evident everywhere. It was hard to miss the venue as signs indicating the route to the school seemed to be everywhere. There was plenty of space available for parking cars and Ruth had press-ganged her family and friends to act as attendants and helpers. Their efforts in providing refreshments both liquid and solid were most appreciated by those who were present.

There were numerous stalls trading in records covering many spheres of music from Opera, Lieder, Instrumental, Orchestral, Music Hall, Musicals, Variety Dance Bands, Jazz and so on. Most were 78s but cylinders, LPs and even CDs were also to be seen for sale. Machine enthusiasts were catered for with quite a variety of phonographs and gramophones to be seen on the stalls. Ruth was there with a colourful display of needle tins for sale. After seeing so many unusual needle tins I can well understand why Ruth has the nickname 'Queen of the Needle Tins'. I also saw various items of ephemera for sale, like catalogues and leaflets advertising machines and records, various books connected with our hobby and photographs of artists from the days of cylinders and 78s.

In the smaller hall some members had set up stalls to display the machines they had restored. Miles Mallinson was there with an Edison Triumph he had just finished restoring. John Gomer demonstrated his Columbia Twentieth-Century Premier Graphophone. One of the more unusual items on view in this hall was the EMG look-alike which John Taylor had assembled. The horn was of his own manufacture.

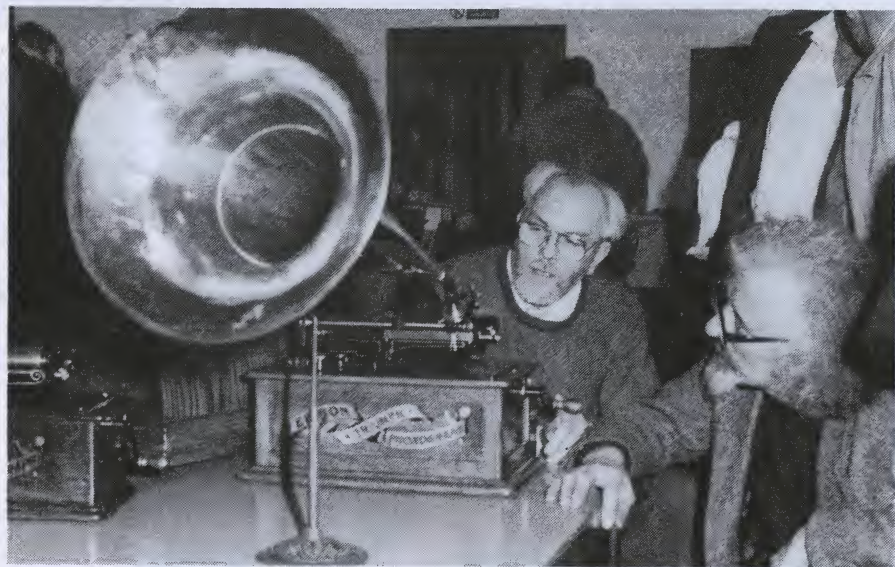
Ruth Lambert is to be congratulated for organising a successful event and our sincere thanks go to her her helpers and to all who helped to contribute to the Society's funds. The Treasurer has told me that inspite of the recession the Society was still able to make a small profit from the day's activities.

I would like to thank our member Arthur George for providing the photographs that accompany this report.

**Ariel**



Miles Mallinson, Frank Andrews and Ann Mallinson admire Miles' Edison Triumph



Miles shows off his Edison Triumph to John Gomer



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## **THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY**

### **A.G.M.**

**The Annual General Meeting will be held on September 25th at  
2.30pm in St. Matthews Church Hall, Wolverhampton.**

Nominations for officers and committee members should be sent in writing to the Secretary by 30th August 1993. Any member with any matter they want discussed at this meeting should also put it in writing to the Secretary by 30th August 1993.

## **CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY (MIDLANDS GROUP)**

### **25th Anniversary Phonofair Saturday 25th September 1993**

**at St. Matthews Church Hall, junction of East Park Way & Willenhall Road (A454),  
Wolverhampton 10.00am to 4.00pm**

Sales Stalls (78s, cylinders, LPs, machines etc.) Talking Machine 'Concours d'Élegance'  
Miller, Morris & Co. will be in attendance with their recording equipment. Refreshments  
Have a Browse or a Natter to Your Fellow Collectors

#### **Admission only 50p**

Stalls available, telephone Geoff Howl on [REDACTED] for details (evenings)  
Concours d'Élegance details telephone Phil Bennett on [REDACTED] (Answerphone)

Motorists use Motorway M6 Jct 10 then follow A454 past Willenhall to Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton/Walsall buses pass the venue every few minutes (Wolverhampton Bus Station is only two minutes walk from the Railway Station). There is a two hour service from Euston.

### **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**C.L.P.G.S. Midland Group Meeting, Saturday 18th September 1993  
at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane Birmingham**

Tom Poole, the grandson of the eminent Birmingham based banjoist and pioneer recording artiste John Pidoux, will be our speaker for this evening. John Pidoux made many records on both cylinder and disc, as well as performing 'live' on many occasions. Tom will be speaking on his grandfather's life and work and will illustrate his talk with a number of his grandfather's recordings, some of which have never been available commercially.

The venue is adjacent to Marks & Spencer's High Street store and is only a few minutes walk from New Street Station. Limited car parking on site but there is a large car park nearby.

For further information 'phone Phil Bennett on [REDACTED] (Answerphone)



## FROM THE ROSTRUM

### Sotheby's, 29th February 1993

First of all, my apologies to readers for my absence from these columns for so long, and many thanks to all those who sent their best wishes to me in my new position.

Although the sales I am handling here are somewhat smaller than those marathons I conducted at the other place, the quality and prices I'm pleased to say have stayed high. In our most recent sale on February 25th there were a number of unusual items which piqued the interest.

Top of the list (price-wise at any rate) was an HMV 202 which sold for £10350. Now if you thought it was safe to try and buy one of these beasts again you weren't alone. As we all know the price for the smaller re-entrants seemed to have bottomed out if you went to the sales and shops, so when this one came in I did not put that high an estimate on it, £2000 - £3000 to be exact. In fact it came in so late that we did not have time to photograph it and put a picture in our catalogue. It was however a good clean honest machine, having been in one gentleman's ownership since new; so you can imagine my surprise at the price, which incidentally was a new record price for a gramophone and the first to break through the £10,000 price barrier.

Another cabinet machine with more than its share of interest was an Edison Amberola 80. This is the model which the Edison company brought out in 1928-29 in order to use up Diamond Disc machine cabinets and cylinder mechanisms. Again this machine had been in the same family since new (the first owner was a phonograph dealer in Leeds) and so the machine was in good original condition. At £1,650 this wasn't expensive for a near unique machine.

Other prices included £975 for a travelling arm Zonophone with glass side panels, £1,100 for an oak horned Junior Monarch, £575 for a somewhat tired Klingsor and £575 for a Puck with a gnome sitting in the horn. One final surprise was the £830 paid for a National Microphone Dancer (admittedly in mint condition with its original box).

Whilst here I'll just mention a couple of items that came up late last year. They were a pair of early Edison machines which came in together, yet again from descendants of the original owner. They were a Class M phonograph and a Kinetoscope. The Class M was an exhibition model and in a glazed case with floral inlay patterns. This was the fifth Class M to come up in London in as many years. Undoubtedly it was the most spectacular looking of the five and this was reflected in the price of £5,280.

The Class M's cousin the Kinetoscope may not have been as handsome but it was certainly more interesting. For those who may not be familiar with it, the Kinetoscope was one of the earliest (if not the earliest) motion picture machines. It was built along the lines of the later What the Butler Saw machines of the early 20th century, but dated circa 1894. There had never been one up for sale as far as we could ascertain so whatever estimate we put on it was a bit of a wild guess. To make a long story short it sold for a staggering £21,500. All right for some!

**George Glastris**

## REVIEWS



### The Aviators

Right from the early days of recording many of the pioneers of aviation were persuaded to make recordings about their exploits. This CD consists of some of these. These records, all from the collection of David Mason and expertly transferred by Colin Attwell, give a fascinating account of the early days of aviation.

The earliest recording on this disc is one made by Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, the airship pioneer, in 1908 for the Favorite Company of Germany. In it he appeals for contributions for a fund set up for the families of the victims of the disaster of his airship Z4. He goes on to explain that his airships would soon be the most reliable and safest means of transport in the world.

Another German record to be heard is that made by Flugkapitän Friedrich Christiansen for Triton Schallplatten GmbH in 1932. He describes his historic flight across the Atlantic from America to Germany in May 1932 in a Dornier Do.X flying boat. This was, for the time, a massive plane with a wingspan of 48 metres, a length of 42 metres and with 12 engines giving a total of 8000 horsepower. The Do.X had a take-off weight of 55,000 kilos and could carry more than 100 people. The original record was a picture disc. One side contained a photograph of the Do.X flying boat. This is used as the illustration on the front cover of the informative booklet that accompanies the CD.

Sir Alan Cobham can be heard describing his flight *From England to Australia in Six Minutes* on an Edison Bell Winner made in

1926. In this journey Sir Alan was surveying possible routes for civil flights. He had chosen a seaplane for this as he felt he had a better chance of survival should he be forced down due to the monsoon weather over Burma. His De Havilland seaplane used 17 gallons of petrol per hour, had storage on board for 150 galls and he cruised at around 100m.p.h.

Other aviators to be heard are Claude Graham-White, Amy Johnson, The Hon. Mrs Victor Bruce, Wing-Commander Charles Kingsford-Smith, Col. Charles Lindbergh, Maryse Bastié (a French lady aviator), Clarence Chamberlain and Charles A. Levine. These last two, I must confess, I had never heard of before. They flew across the Atlantic shortly after Lindbergh but travelled further. They reached Berlin.

A gripping account of an *Air Battle over the English Channel* on 14th July 1940 is given by Charles Gardner of the BBC on Decca SP 35 from BBC matrices. Graphic descriptions are given of a Junkers Ju87 shot down while trying to attack a British convoy. Later on a dogfight between Hurricanes and Messerschmitts is described. Fortunately the R.A.F. get the better hand and the enemy is driven back to the French coast.

At various points through the CD there are musical excerpts which provide light relief from the serious content.

Many of the records heard on this CD are extremely hard to find and Pearl and David Mason are to be congratulated in making these documentary recordings available to a wider audience.

I can thoroughly recommend this CD to anyone interested in the recent history of human achievement.

This CD **Pearl Flapper PAST CD 9760** is available from the Society's Booklist price **£10.50** including postage. Overseas purchasers should add 10%.

**Chris Hamilton**



## The Blaze of Day

This CD is another compilation from David Mason's collection of documentary recordings. This time the records are all connected with the Suffragette Movement. The CD's title is taken from the text of Dame Ethel Smyth's battle hymn *The March of the Women*.

In these days when universal suffrage is taken for granted it is easily forgotten that it was not until 1928 that women won the right to vote in this country. In France they did not get the vote until 1944. Even more surprising was that the Swiss women did not win the right to vote until 1971!

The CD opens with a spirited account of Dame Ethel Smyth's overture *The Wreckers* conducted by that formidable woman herself. This was recorded for Columbia in May 1930.

One of the famous suffragettes was Teresa Garnett (1886-1956) who was jailed and had to be forcibly fed while imprisoned. We have two interesting accounts of incidents from her life given in an interview she gave towards the end of her life. In the first she relates how she gate-crashed the party given by the Foreign Office on 25th June 1909 to celebrate King Edward VII's birthday. She managed to grab the guests' attention and give her views on women's suffrage while the musicians were changing their music! In the second incident she relates how she met Winston Churchill at Bristol Railway Station with a horse-whip in her hand!

Sir Michael Tippett's mother, Isobel Kemp, gives an account of a bye-election in Ipswich before the First World War. This was part of an interview she gave to Antonia Raeburn in 1965.

Christobel Pankhurst recorded her views on women's suffrage for the Gramophone Co. Ltd. in December 1908. This is reproduced on the CD.

By 1915 only some of the states of the United States of America had universal suffrage and Mrs Raymond Brown, a well-known American promoter of women's rights, made a recording for American Pathé expounding her views. This was issued doubled with Rabbi Stephen Wise expressing his support for the right of women to vote. Both these are to be heard on this CD.

Margaret Bondfield, the Labour MP, made a recording for Columbia in 1929 in which she appeals to women to use their newly won right to vote to support the Labour Party in the 1929 General Election. Labour stood for raising the school leaving age, raising old age pensions, increased maternity and child welfare and better training for young workers. Peace and disarmament were also major items of their campaign.

Meanwhile Mrs Wintringham, a Liberal MP, had also made a record for Columbia for the same General Election in which she claimed that giving the women the right to vote had forced all the political parties to change their manifestos to encompass the views and aspirations of women.

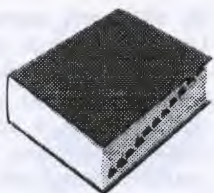
There are also several Music Hall items about women's suffrage on this CD. The artistes are Barclay Gammon, Mark Sheridan, Warwick Green, Arthur Aiston, Jen Latona, Jock Mills and Wilkie Bard. From listening to these it was obvious that most were fighting a rearguard against the march of progress.

The transfers are all expertly done by Colin Attwell. This CD is highly recommendable and once again my thanks to Pearl and David Mason for making these rare recordings available to a wider public.

This CD **Pearl GEMM CD 9949** is available from the Society's booklist at **£10.50** including postage. Overseas buyers please add 10%.

**Chris Hamilton**

## REVIEWS



### THE GERMAN NATIONAL DISCOGRAPHY

General Editor, Rainer E. Lotz

Dr Rainer Lotz is devoted to publishing a German National Discography of 78 (etc.) r.p.m. records because even though there have been records in his country for over a hundred years no complete listing has been published. So he aims to publish volumes in topical series and work has begun on:

- 1) A Discography of German Kleinkunst (cabaret, musical comedy, "personality", music hall, film, humour, "chanson" etc.)
- 2) A Discography of German Dance Music
- 3) A Discography of recordings by German artists of song and operatic arias in any language
- 4) A Discography of Spoken-word recordings

It is hoped to build up to one or two volumes in each series each year. It is decided that label listings in Germany would be impractical. No subsidies are received, thus all costs come from Dr Lotz's own pocket and he hopes that by having very limited editions, the sale of one volume will pay for the following. As far as I am aware, Brazil and Sweden are the only countries in which such publications have been officially subsidised and which perhaps demonstrates that **those** countries are civilised and proud of their artistic heritage. Even though Dr Lotz will produce very limited 'runs' of 300 copies of each volume, one hopes that it will result in a complete set held in the National Library of Germany for posterity. This is a very ambitious and highly commendable project which we hope will succeed. The selection of artists for each volume depends upon the availability of information. The alphabetical approach would mean that incomplete details on one artist could hold up the whole project. In fact, it might never get past the letter A. Negligent disposal at recording companies of ledgers and destruction by war (man is the most quarrelsome animal on earth) means that we often rely on the survival of discs themselves and the

co-operation of collectors and archives. Phonograph cylinders, sound postcards and some radio transcriptions will be listed but **no** microgrooves or private recordings. Thus in each series, in each volume, artists will be listed alphabetically but will not be exhaustive for each letter of the alphabet. However, it means that the German National Discography has begun publication. The pagination in each series will be consecutive and each volume will have a cumulative index of the contents of all previous volumes. This is an almost foolproof system. Each artist is covered chronologically. There is a standard tough binding for all volumes so that they will look smart upon your bookshelf, sized 6½ x 9¼ inches (or, if you live in a metric country 16 x 23cm). The topical approach to compiling a discography (here beginning at the beginning) will make it easy to use by the average person, broadcasters, writers, producers, collectors, etc. who are not conversant with the history or development of the recording industry. Other series are planned, but will depend on the volunteering by suitable 'editors' to undertake compilation. One hopes that there will be a series for those gallants who are often called 'recording artists' who never performed in public despite their great ability and the immeasurable pleasure they brought to millions of record-buyers, and who, in the early days of recording brought us songs and musical pieces never recorded by those who performed, or were closely associated with them on stage or in public.

Now let's look at what have appeared to date:.....

I have three volumes in the *Discographie der deutschen Kleinkunst* and one of German Dance Music. For a start, you require no knowledge of German if you understand **records**. Each page has the artist's name at the top. On the left is the matrix number and on the extreme right is the original catalogue number. At the head of each recording session is the name of the record make. In the middle, for every recording is the date of recording and place, together with the name or type of accompaniment, title of piece performed with name(s) of composer(s) and lyricist(s). If from a musical comedy, operetta, film, etc. or if other artist(s) performed on the recording he/she/they is/are named. In this latter case there is a cross-reference. For example, Max Hansen recorded on 17th March 1927 for Beka with Irene Ambrus. On reference to the recordings of Miss Ambrus one finds the same session listed showing that Mr Hansen was present too. In the column for catalogue numbers is sometimes KVN, meaning that no issue of that recording is known (for example it often refers to "second takes"). NE indicates the date when a



recording was first listed in a catalogue, giving an approximation of recording date when that is unknown.

As well as purely German entertainment the *Kleinkunst* series contains names of those whose work was heard worldwide. So my eyes went down just a few names when I saw Lale Andersen whose *Lied eines jungen Wachpostens* with a good tune by Norbert Schultze was also heard by Allied troops (in World War II) and given English lyrics to become equally popular as *Lili Marlene*. Miss Andersen had begun recording in 1935 and went on into the 1950s. The HMV "B" series contained many discs by the Comedian Harmonists who recorded 315 titles, such was their popularity. Austin Egen was nearly as prolific, but few of his recordings were released in Britain. The same fate befell Zarah Leander, the Swedish cabaret and film star who performed equally in Germany in German and who recorded 211 titles between 1930 and 1957. Lotte Lenja had only a few 78 rpm recordings. I was pleased to see Mitzi Günther<sup>1</sup> who created the role of Anna Glawari in *The Merry Widow* which opened in Vienna on 30th December 1905 (and whose recording career was from 1905 to circa 1919/20) and her contemporary Fritzi Massary whose recording career ended in London in 1938 when performing in Noel Coward's *Operette* (HMV B 8738). Also from the world of operetta is Alexander Girardi<sup>1</sup>, for whom Gustav Pick wrote the famous *Fiaker Lied* and which he created in 1885 and with which he began his recording career in 1900 on a 7" Berliner disc - going on for 83 titles until his death in 1918; and Weiss Ferdl, of whom I found some Austrian pressings, recorded from 1908 until after World War II. That great character delineator, Karl Valentin (mostly with his partner Lisl Karlstadt) recorded from 1920 until after World War II. Who else do you know? Anny Ahlers, Gitta Alpar, Siegfried Arno, Berthold Brecht (who had only a few titles), Eva Busch, Hans Moser, Pola Negri, Marlene Dietrich, Otto Reutter (329 titles 1920-1930, mostly his own compositions), Max Schmeling the boxer, Rosita Serrano, Conrad Veidt, Lilian Harvey and no doubt others from this fine collection showing the work of 175 artists that should be supported by all those interested in this type of recording. Space precludes a complete list of the artists but I'm sure that an International Postal reply Coupon will secure a list from the publishers. The price per hardback volume is 100DM, initially limited to 300 copies only. These three books edited by Manfred Wehmüller are most highly recommended.

Volume 1 of *Discographie der deutschen Tanzmusik* edited by Rainer E. Lotz nails the lie of British

propaganda because dance/swing bands continued to perform and record in Germany during World War II, especially in 1941 when that country had become so dominant in Europe. The actual style of playing and arrangement differed from British and American bands in the 1930s but by the 1940s had become similar, despite, one assumes, that musicians were called to the 'forces' like in many another country. During the LP era 78 rpm recordings by the bands were re-issued, just as in other countries. I am unaware of the present situation but imagine that re-issues continue on CD. I have several excellent LPs on Telefunken, Electrola etc. and "Pirates". This volume of 277 pages lists the recordings of Erhard Bauske, Alfred Bernes, Erwin Bolt, Michael Danzi, Julian Fuhs, Robert Gaden, Gerhard Hoffman, Oskar Joost, Teddy Kleindin, James Kok, Mátyás Seiber (Matthias Scheiber).

This last was a big surprise for me because I associated him only with classical music, having met him in the 1950s. Rainer Lotz tells me that at the time of his 1931 recordings he was very influential by his arrangements for dance bands. Of the bands listed here, Robert Gaden began recording for Parlophon in 1920, Julian Fuhs in 1925 and the others variously from the late 1920s to Teddy Kleindin who began in 1941. Erhard Bauske and Oskar Joost were prolific recorders under their own names and pseudonyms, or as accompaniments to vocalists etc. Reference to the index under these "other" names takes one to the real artists. As the series builds up the pseudonyms will be an extremely important and vital part. One wishes that all of the German dance bands could have been listed at once as in Rust & Forbes's *British Dance Bands* book, but Dr Lotz has no access to a publisher like *The Gramophone*.

The Importance of The German National Discography has been recognised by many bodies and it won an award from the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC), for "excellence in historical recorded sound research". I hope that record-enthusiasts will support the project in the practical way by purchasing the volumes as they appear. Price 100DM each, all four volumes are available from **Birgit Lotz Verlag**.

Bonn 2, Germany. **Postage and packing** is extra at 3.5DM inside Germany, 4DM inside Europe and 10DM elsewhere per volume.

**Footnote 1:** Both Mitzi Günther and Alexander Girardi can be heard in their famous performances on Pearl LP GEMM 248 (which may now exist as a CD) titled *Creators of Operetta*.

**Ernie Bayly**

## **HAYES ON RECORD**

**edited by**  
**Peter Hall and Colin Brown**

This book has been compiled by Peter Hall and Colin Brown, both employees of Thorn E.M.I. Ltd. It tells the tale of record and tape manufacture at the factories at Hayes in Middlesex. The articles in the book have all been written by staff connected with the factories.

What a fascinating story they tell! The story opens with a tour round the Blyth Road factory in the middle 1950s. The reader learns how 78s, 45s and LPs are made. The difference processes in manufacturing 78rpm, 45rpm and LP records are explained in detail.

By the late 1960s the sales of records by E.M.I. Ltd. had expanded so much that the Blyth Road site, which had been in use since 1908, was no longer capable of meeting the demands of the market. It was decided to move record production to a new site at 1-3, Uxbridge Road in Hayes. The new factory was opened in March 1972.

Details of the new factory and its construction are given and a brief description of its opening follows. Then the reader is taken on on a guided tour of the

the factory during 1990 and learns how LPs, 45s and cassettes are made. The methods used to manufacture these had changed considerably since the 1950s visit described earlier in the book. These are explained in detail.

A whole chapter is devoted to describing the equipment used in this factory. Another chapter describes life working at Hayes as told by various employees. Brief biographies of various important members of staff are also given.

As the days of pressing LPs are drawing to a close it is important that some idea of the techniques and processes involved in their manufacture is preserved so that future generations can discover how it was done.

This book with its copious illustrations and photographs is an enjoyable, entertaining and informative historical document on how records were made. With over 200 pages and priced at £8 this book is excellent value for money and I can recommend it to all collectors of records.

*Hayes on Record* is available from the Society's booklist priced £8. Overseas buyers please add 10%.

**Chris Hamilton**

# **THE NOSTALGIA RECORD FAIR**

**in the Grandstand Lounge, WIMBLEDON STADIUM, Plough Lane,  
LONDON SW17**

**Sunday September 12th 1993**

**Sunday December 5th 1993**

**Licensed Bar and Light Refreshments**

**EARLY PREVIEW ADMISSION £2.50 from 9.30am**

**GENERAL ADMISSION 70p from 11.30am**

**Enquiries/Bookings: B.Wilkinson Tel: [REDACTED]**



# C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

**Item B 50** *HMV 1930 Instrument and Accessories Catalogue* has been reprinted and is now available price **£6** incl. U.K. postage.

**Item B 210** *Hayes on Record* - The story of the manufacture of records and tapes at E.M.I.'s Hayes Factory edited by Peter Hall and Colin Brown. Paperback with over 200 pages and many illustrations is now available price **£8** incl. U.K. postage.

**Item B 211** *World Records, Vocalion W, Fetherflex and Penny Phono Recordings*  
A listing by Frank Andrews, Arthur Badrock and Edward S. Walker is now available price **£4** incl. U.K. postage.

All available from the address listed below (foreign orders **please add 10%**):

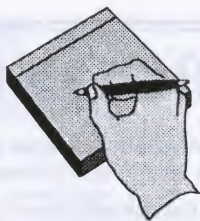
**Don Moore,** [REDACTED] **Caistor,**  
**Lincolnshire LN7 6RX**

## Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the **third Thursday evening of the month** promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

<b>August 19th</b>	George Woolford in <i>1904 and Melba</i> . George introduces some of the records issued by The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. in 1904
<b>September 16th</b>	<i>We Have Our Own Records, Part 2</i> - Frank Andrews presents a further glimpse into the world of unusual labels
<b>October 21st</b>	John Cowley will be talking about and identifying the role of migrant musicians in the evolution of the recording industry in the U.K.
<b>November 18th</b>	To be announced
<b>December 16th</b>	<i>Members Night</i> - Bring your own favourites to share with others
<b>January 20th 1994</b>	<i>Follow the Dog</i> - Ruth Edge, Archivist with EMI Music Ltd. at Hayes, reveals some of the treasures she is responsible for
<b>February 17th</b>	Ruth Lambert. Title to be announced
<b>March 17th</b>	Chris Hamilton. Title to be announced

# LETTERS



## Oscar Natzka (1)

Dear Chris,

May I say through your magazine a sincere thank you to the gentleman who so kindly made me a cassette recording of Oscar Natzka (bass) singing: *Oh could I but express in song* and *The Song of the Flea* from Columbia DB 2363. I didn't have the opportunity to thank him properly and as I don't know his name, I thought this would be a possible way to say thank you for a most kind thought. He gave it to me at this year's Phonofair at Northampton.

Ann and I again enjoyed our visit to the Northampton Phonofair. It is always a great opportunity to meet old friends in the Society. This is so difficult for us living in Barrow-in-Furness.

Does anyone know if a discography of Oscar Natzka has been made and if so who should I contact?

Yours phonographically,

L. Miles Mallinson, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.

## Oscar Natzka (2)

Dear Mr Hamilton,

In the April 1993 issue of *Hillandale News* you printed a letter on pages 218-219 from L. Miles Mallinson of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, concerning the New Zealand-born bass Oscar Natzka. You very kindly referred him to my letter in the February 1993 issue of *Gramophone*.

Mr Mallinson requested more information about this singer so I am sure he, and your other readers, will find this brief outline of his career to be of interest. For some time I have been conducting ongoing and thorough primary research into Natzka's life and career but regrettably I have found that the documenting of this fine singer's history has been plagued by inaccuracies. However I believe the following to be correct.

Oscar Natzka was born on a farm in the country district of Matapara, in the North Island of New Zealand, on 15th June 1912. His mother was New Zealand born of British parentage and his father was

a German immigrant. Originally the family name was spelt Natzke but in 1947, in order to more correctly approximate its pronunciation, the singer altered the final e to an a.

Natzka was gifted with an outstandingly powerful and resonant bass voice but as a young man family financial circumstances compelled him to take work as a blacksmith and limit his singing to occasional appearances at local concerts. During visits to New Zealand both Galli-Curci and John Brownlee confirmed his exceptional talents but it was not until he was heard by a visiting music examiner, Anderson Tyrer, that a three-year scholarship was awarded in 1935 for him to study in London at Trinity College with Albert Garcia.

After auditioning for Covent Garden in 1938 he was immediately signed to sing in *Faust*, making his debut on 10th October 1938, in the role of Wagner. In the same season he created the important role of De Fulke in the premiere of *The Serf* by George Lloyd and on tour with the company he also sang the Nightwatchman character in *Die Meistersinger*. These brought great critical and audience commendation and were followed by many highly acclaimed concert appearances throughout Britain.

In 1940 Natzka returned to New Zealand for several months to rake an immensely successful part in Centennial Music Festivals. Appearances in Australia were followed by another tour of his homeland the following year and after concerts and broadcasting work in New York and Canada he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy in early 1943. For three years he was a leading singer in the touring all-navy entertainment show *Meet the Navy*, performing throughout Canada, the United Kingdom and Europe.

Leading bass roles in *The Magic Flute* and *Turandot* at Covent Garden in 1947 re-established him immediately as a major operatic performer, the role of Sarastro in the former being regarded as one of his greatest personal successes of his career. In 1948 he was contracted to the New York City Opera, making his debut on 9th April as Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. A large number of highly acclaimed performances with this company followed regularly each subsequent year, along with many other opera, concert and oratorio engagements throughout North America, and another New Zealand and Australian recital tour in 1949. These placed him firmly in the upper echelons of operatic bass singers but he was taken seriously ill during a New York City Opera performance as Pognor in *Die Meistersinger* in New York on 23rd October 1951 and 13 days later, on 5th November 1951, he died, at the tragically early age



of 39. Fortunately, though, his magnificent voice lives on in the Parlophone and Columbia recordings he made during the 1930s and 1940s.

For a more detailed biography of Oscar Natzka, I refer you to *Southern Voices*, a collection of biographies of New Zealand-born international opera singers published in 1992 by Reed International Plc, Private bag, Birkenhead, Auckland, New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Downes, Wellington, New Zealand

## Derek Barsham

Dear Chris,

W. R. Violen in issue No.191 (April 1993) asks for information about Derek Barsham. I do not know anything about his career, but I have one record on which he sings with Gladys Palmer and Norman Lumsden the *Nursery Scene* from Boris Godounov on Australian Decca Z 923 (matrix numbers AR 11093 and AR 11094). I hope this information will be of interest to Mr Violen.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Badham, Pymble N.S.W., Australia

## Help please

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I am very keen to obtain the recording date of four sides cut in (I'm virtually 100% certain) London, in early 1930, by the Orquestra Argentina Rolando du Perron. These four sides were issued by French Columbia in their fledgling DF series under catalogue numbers DF 34 and DF 35. I'm quite certain that release period-wise, these two issues were released no later than 4/30. I have only DF 34 details of which are:

Orquestra Argentina Rolando du Perron. Refrain chanté par Luis Mandarinio

*Barrio Reo* - Tango (matrix WM 5) & *Dandy* - Tango (matrix WM 6)

In connection with this session, I also require matrices and corresponding titles for Columbia DF 35. I'd assume that the matrices are probably WM 7 and 8.

What is the significance/denotation of the letter, viz., 'M'? I've seen this 'M' prefixed matrix series in connection with quite a number of recordings extend-

ing into the late 1930s. Coincidentally, the Ray Ventura Orchestra, on two separate occasions, while in London (in 1938), cut quite a few sides, of which a few were issued by Columbia in the U.K and a few others issued derivatively in France under the Pathé label imprint.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Flakser, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

## EMG Gramophone

Dear Editor,

Reading the accounts by L. Miles Mallinson, *My EMG Dream Machine*, and by Stephen Gadd, *A Collector's Diary in Hillandale News* No.191 of April 1993, of their determined efforts to own EMG gramophones, I appreciate that my own EMG was easily come by, but the story behind the gramophone itself is quite unusual.

I first saw and heard this gramophone in the home of the expatriate medical officer when I came to Antigua, from Edinburgh, in 1958. Knowing nothing of EMG at the time, I was none the less impressed by both the magnificent horn and beautiful reproduction and requested a playing whenever the chance arose. In 1962 the doctor, retiring to the U.K., sold most of his possessions, including rather unexpectedly his gramophone, at a small auction where at the nod of my head I became the owner of an EMG for the sum of forty Eastern Caribbean dollars (then £8.6s.8d) along with a few 78s, an enormous supply of fibre needles (still not exhausted) and an EMG Davey needle cutter. A simple tale of serendipity rather than effort at a time when old gramophones were little appreciated, but it is the background to this particular machine that I often think of while it plays.

The medical officer and his wife had been stationed in Hong Kong in the late 1930s and had with them an EMG. When Hong Kong fell to the Japanese in 1941 they were captured, losing the gramophone along with everything else and spent the war years in prison camps, without knowledge of each other, survived and returned to the U.K. probably late 1946 after convalescing. The doctor in these years developed an inordinate wish to have the gramophone reinstated in his life.

At that time the EMG company still existed and, although no longer making horn gramophones, undertook to assemble one for the doctor from stored parts, with the exception of the cabinet which they had made for the occasion. So this machine is one of the last EMG's ever produced. Possibly the last but

that is only wishful thinking! The doctor brought the gramophone to Antigua around 1949, was very attached to it but by 1962 felt that he could dispense with it.

I knew little about this gramophone until seeing an earlier model in the Science Museum, London many years after getting it, in an exhibit of sound machines now withdrawn, but I could not to identify it particularly. Then, a few years ago, I read of the C.L.P.G.S. in the Shire booklet *Old Gramophones* and although the address given was out of date, with some clever detective work at 4000 miles distance, I made contact with the C.L.P.G.S., wrote to George Glastrie and then to Christopher Proudfoot and by October 1992, thirty years after getting it, understand that I have, from my own description, an EMG Mark 10b. It is often played and greatly enjoyed.

The gramophone was in very good condition when I bought it, except for needing some repair to the horn where the upper cardboard section fits over the lower metal section. This is not an export model (as in Christie's advertisement in *Hillandale News* No.184) but is otherwise very similar. The cabinet is oak veneer in diagonal quarters with ebony edges and feet. The electric motor, original from EMG, is a Garrard 201 B/1, a beautiful thing, well worth undoing a few screws now and then to have a peek, with an induction wheel about 7½" diameter, direct drive controlled by a three-ball governor - much the same in principle as a wind-up motor but with the spring replaced by an electric wheel. (Technically proficient readers will forgive my naive terminology, please.) The sound box, arm etc. are all as original.

Enthused by sharing a house with my Mark 10b, I have since collected locally, a Decca portable with sound reflector in the lid, an HMV portable, a Victrola cabinet model and a Sonora steel 'suitcase' model A-10, made in New York (in the mid 1940s?), of powerful voice and considerable weight but very battered with un-original crane. I have also an agglomerate of hundreds of unsorted records!

Great stuff! Had I stayed in Scotland I might have been content to hoard whisky miniatures.

Best wishes to C.L.P.G.S..

Sincerely,

Eric Smith, Antigua, West Indies.

## HMV Pick-up

Dear Editor,

I was pleased to see my letter in the June issue of *Hillandale News*, but oh dear, oh dear! I expect letters are arriving thick and fast to point out that the pick-up in the photograph is not a Model No.2 but a No.11. I must put the blame on my typewriter which uses the letter I as the the number one. On its own it is O.K. but a pair does look like the Roman 2.

Presumably the No.11 was preceded by ten earlier examples. A subject for an article perhaps?

Yours truly,

David J. Riches, Feltham, Middlesex

## Survivors from the acoustic age

Dear Chris,

With regard to the correspondence on survivors from the acoustic recording age our Honorary Member Cavan O'Connor tells me that he made two acoustic sides of Gilbert and Sullivan songs for the Aeolian Company in 1924. He tells me he will be 94 years of age on July 1st.

Another from those days, even earlier in fact, is Evelyn Laye who recorded 3 songs from the Gaiety show *Going Up* on June 6th 1918, these appearing on HMV D 419 and HMV C 860. Unfortunately I understand she is no longer able to care for herself and lives in a nursing home.

Yours sincerely,

George Frow, Sevenoaks, Kent

Dear Editor,

For several years now, it has been a common (but careless) practice when reporting the death of some aged recording artist, to comment that "X must have been the last person alive to have recorded acoustically."

So, at this late date, it was refreshing to read in the June issue of *Hillandale News* (p265) Elizabeth Bartlett's open-minded query: "Are there any others?"

Yes, there are indeed! As well as the baritone Roy Henderson (born in Edinburgh in 1899) on Vocalion records, there is Sidonie Goossens (born in 1899 in Liscard, Cheshire); for over 50 years she was harpist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and she



recorded solos and accompaniments on acoustic HMV.

Sir Keith Falkner, the bass-baritone, (born 1900 in Sawston near Cambridge) featured in the acoustic HMV recording of Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover* and the pianist Shura Cherkassky (born in Odessa in 1911) recorded short pieces for Victor in 1922 at the age of 11.

There is also the pianist Jeanne-Marie Darré (born 1905 in Givet, France): she made Vocalion records at the age of 17 and is probably still alive - I have been unable to find any mention of her death.

There are probably several other artists, both greater and lesser, who are now in their nineties and who made recordings in their early twenties - that is in the early 1920s or earlier.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Adamson, St. Andrews, Fife

(I think Zino Francescatti (born in Marseilles in 1902) who recorded some titles in 1922 for The Gramophone Company Ltd. is still alive. Ed.)

## Violet Essex

Dear Chris,

Many thanks for the June issue of *Hillandale News*, always full of interest. Re Violet Essex - I can only give details of two records:

ENCORE 551

Side No.560 Matrix 40802: Violet Essex singing *Dear Heart* and Harry Thornton singing *The Skipper*.

Side No.585: Two orchestral items.

HMV B 1001

Side No. 2-3321G Matrix HO 4333ae: Vera Desmond singing Nicholls's *A Night of Romance*

Side No. 2-3322G Matrix HO 4336ae: Vera Desmond singing Romberg's *The Ragtime Pipes of Pan*

Carry on the good work!

Best wishes,

John A. Turner, Chorley, Lancashire

## Violet Essex and Una Bourne

Dear Chris,

I note a gremlin crept into my article on Violet Essex, causing Lilian Davies to be shown as 57 when she died. She was only 37, of course

In *More Personalities Behind the Names* Frank Andrews included Una Bourne, who recorded some of Cécile Chaminade's charming pieces. 'Una Bourne' must have been a pseudonym. Does anyone know her real name, and have any details of when she was born and died?

Yours sincerely,

Peter Cliffe, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

## Decca Listing

Dear Sir,

I am preparing a Listing of Decca Recordings from 1929 to 1955 and would greatly appreciate the assistance of fellow readers of *Hillandale News* for general and numerical catalogues covering this period, with special information of pre-war recordings.

I shall be including Record Number, Artist, Title, Matrix Number, Dates of recording and recording venues where known and issue dates.

Any assistance given will be most gratefully accepted and acknowledged.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Smith, [REDACTED] Gillingham,  
Kent ME8 0HG

## REPORTS



### London Meeting, April 15th 1993

At some time, the awful thought of their mistakes being faithfully recorded must have occurred to even the most famous of artists. Their worst fears were realised in our April meeting when Rick Hardy and Len Watts revealed all!

From the dawn of recording emerged famous artists coughing, singing or playing wrong notes, missing their entrances and competing with the choruses.

From an unpublished G&T of Melba singing *Sweet Bird That Shun'st to Noise of Folly* we heard her sweetly stating "We'll have to do it all over again" after the flautist Philippe Gaubert made a slip. Likewise the great violinist Sarasate playing *Zigeunerweisen* on G&T 37938 is heard to remark "I think I'll have the first few bars again". The engineers paid no heed and allowed the pause and slip to be issued.

One would assume that politicians and those used to public speaking, although unused to the recording horn, would be less likely to make mistakes. Asquith was heard to remark tersely "There, will that do?" at the end of his recording of the *Speech on the Budget for 1909*. Christabel Pankhurst on HMV 01016, a lady not remembered for being shy, is prompted to start at the beginning of her speech on *Suffrage for Women*.

Musical comedy artistes, faced with similar rhyming lines and repetitive tunes could be forgiven for forgetting just where they were. Florrie Forde tries to sing the words *Daisy Bell* to another tune. W. H. Berry tries to rhyme "toeses" with "re-treeses" in the electric recording on HMV C 1241 of *Summer is Here*. Poor Dan Leno flounders with his *Hard boiled Wasp* on G&T 2-2807 and simply states "I think I've forgotten" in *Poppies* on G&T 2-2530. Clever trumpeter Arthur Laycock triple tonguing *Goodbye Sweetheart*, *Goodbye* falls over himself on Pathé 748. Reginald Dixon thumps out *Where's that Tiger?* on Regal Zonophone MR 1432.

Worse still is where the clever engineers slip up. The announcer on Henry Lytton's Berliner 2277 says Typewriter and Gramophone Company instead of Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. The stylus of the transfer machine skips more than the odd groove with The Original Dixieland Jazz Band (dubbed from a hill-and-dale Vocalion) on Brunswick 02500. There is a 48 second silence on HMV when the listener loses the Aldershot Tattoo of 1926.

There are also the odd cases where the artistes have to speed up their performances to avoid running out of space on the record as on Pathé 5320 of *Death or Glory March*. There are other problems where Columbia issued the *Henry VIII Ballet* on four 12" sides while HMV try to cram it all on two sides, on HMV C 340, by speeding everything up.

Early records suffer from fluctuation in speed but more unexplained is the dramatic speeding up of some recordings at the centre of the record, as in Berliner 23206 where Madame Michailova sings the *Cavatina* from Linda di Chamounix. Finally George Robey's "A Little Idea of My Own", where credited with the first recorded use of the word 'bloody', the engineers have modified the grooves so that the stylus misses the word.

Len thanked fellow members who had responded to his appeal in *Hillandale News* for suitable recordings. The audience enjoyed themselves trying to anticipate the next mistake! Our thanks got to Len and Rick for giving us a splendid performance. Hopefully enough new material will emerge for a sequel to be given next year.

G.W.

### Midlands Group Meeting at Carrs Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham on May 15th 1993

The chairman welcomed a good attendance including some new faces, one of whom, Doug Dowe, came from Australia.

The secretary mentioned that a number of members had campaigned for a branch outing and for once a non-gramophonic event had been arranged. On Sunday 18th July a journey on the Ffestiniog Railway from Portmadoc to Blaenau Ffestiniog has been planned, leaving Portmadoc Harbour Station at 1.30pm.



A long programme was presented at this meeting titled *Jazz - Old and New*. The first half on traditional vintage jazz was given by our secretary, Phil Bennett. With his usual detailed accuracy for facts and figures and using a dozen of his treasured 78s, he traced the progression of jazz from its roots in ragtime in 1910, with *Temptation Rag* by Arthur Pryor's band through to 1940, with Johnny Dodds revivalist version of *Gravier Street Blues* (recorded some two months before his death).

After the usual tea and coffee break, the second half was another 'first' for us as regards the style of the music presented. Ed Parker gave a lively and informed account of be-bop (modern jazz), his time span was only a few years and he explained that the style was born out of the attempt of jazz musicians to explore and attempt new ideas in jazz. From

Kenny Clark's *Epistrophy* recorded in 1941 (but not issued until 1950) through to Fats Navarro's *Ice Free Red* of 1947. We heard also some of the big names in the world of be-bop such as Charlie Parker, Dizzie Gillespie and Thelonius Monk. Ed finished with the 1949 Lennie Tristanu Quartet's *Cross Current* which demonstrated a change in style to the so-called "cool school" and signified that be-bop had virtually run its course.

These two programmes complemented each other very well and our thanks go to Phil and Ed for such an enjoyable evening.

The next meeting on 17th July at the same venue will be the time-honoured Musical Quiz by Geoff Howl.

**Geoff Howl**

## PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS by George Frow

It is years and years since I have seen a genuine smooth-haired fox terrier with any resemblance to Nipper, in fact in the celebrations a few years ago to celebrate the centenary of Berliner's Gramophone some very dubious pooches were rounded up. A young bull-terrier on BBC Television for instance was shown doing all the right things but had a soppy face, and other contenders at the time were such as the hyper-active Jack Russells, too stunted to peer into gramophone horns anyway.

Without making a 'big thing' of this and enquiring from the Kennel Club, it would seem that the Nipper of today is as far out of fashion as the cylinder phonograph, yet when I look through those sepia family photographs of a century ago - at the time Nipper was on earth - a smooth fox-terrier was often included and I recall survivors of those days saying "Jim was a wonderful ratter" or "Jack would worry sheep if we didn't watch him". We had our own Jim as well when I was young.

These dogs were go-ers but Nipper always seemed to be a sitter, another sedentary terrier rather similar to Mr Punch's Toby, but Nipper has always been rather more identifiable to the world than Rin-tin-tin or Jock of the Bushveld, or even Conan Doyle's 'gigantic hound'. Although novel characters, these were go-ers all the same in their own patches, and Nipper's passive submission to his master's voice must be a matter of derision in the kennels above.

Much earlier than Nipper of course was Llewellyn's faithful Gellert, but he got into mortal trouble in 1205 because of his high fidelity.

A return to the public mood that accepted sharp, bright-eyed fox terriers instead of status dogs might be a good thing now, and a canary too, so that woofers and tweeters might mean more to the household than furniture from Comet Warehouses.



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*Melba Gramophone £4,180*

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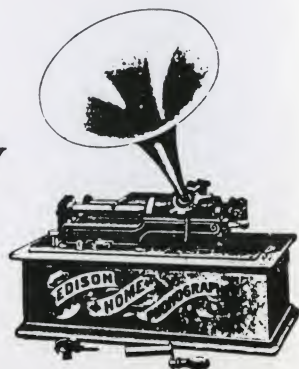
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# C.L.P.G.S. MIDLAND GROUP

## The First Twenty-five Years!

Part One: 1968 - 1981

by Mark Morgan

The formation of the Midlands Group was the result of efforts made by Phil Bennett, who aimed to create the opportunity for members, who could not travel conveniently to London, to meet on a regular basis.

Ron Geesin and Ken Pye, who were already members of C.L.P.G.S., persuaded Phil to join in 1966, Phil already being an established jazz record collector after being introduced to jazz by two cousins. He had purchased many LPs before his first 78, which was *West End Blues* performed by Louis Armstrong's Hot Five on a Parlophone. This was purchased for 6d from a junk shop in Bilston.

In 1966 there were two membership rates for the Society: London and Country, the former being higher than the latter as it was applicable to those members who attended the London meetings (which included the room hire charge). The latter was for those members unable to attend London meetings, thus resulting in a lower fee. The Country membership had gradually grown, but unfortunately (as now in some parts) the only link most of these members had with the society was via our excellent journal *Hillandale News*.

In 1967 the two-tier membership fee was abandoned in favour of a standard rate of 15 shillings. It was in the summer of this year that the C.L.P.G.S. mounted a large exhibition in London at the Gresham College. This event celebrated the 90th anniversary of Edison's invention and ran for two weeks. Phil took the opportunity of visiting this exhibition and was able to meet many C.L.P.G.S. members including some

of those on the 1967 Committee. It was at this exhibition that he encountered other members who also felt the lack of meetings outside of London to be an undesirable situation but none of them had, up to that point, considered the possibility of holding meetings outside London.

In the light of some support Phil Bennett resolved to establish a group which would meet outside London. This would be the first area group of C.L.P.G.S. in Britain.

This idea was formally proposed to the then secretary, Ernie Bayly, who gave it enthusiastic support. Since Phil was a resident of Wolverhampton and ran a Jazz Club on Friday nights at the *Giffard's Arms*, a public house in the centre of Wolverhampton with spacious upstairs rooms, he was able to obtain the use of this venue to hold the meetings for the proposed Midland Area Group.

At that time all members were supplied with a list of the current membership and Phil was able to use this to contact all C.L.P.G.S. members who could reach Wolverhampton. Since many depended on public transport, a radius of thirty miles from Wolverhampton was concluded to be the most practical area for the new group. Phil then undertook to contact all members within this radius and to appraise them of his desire to form a Midlands Group in the hope that they would wish to attend.

Phil Bennett was already in contact with some members such as Jim Boulton and Leon Cowlshaw. The majority however



(due to the lack of facilities for members to meet) were either not well known or completely unknown personally to Phil, who undertook to contact all of them by letter or telephone. He even knocked on some doors!

The reception was, in general, warm and support for his proposals became apparent; thus Phil was able to call the first meeting of the Midlands Area Group of The City of London and Gramophone Society on Saturday 20th January 1968 in the *Giffard's Arms*, Wolverhampton.

It was decided at this meeting not to form a committee at this meeting and Phil was appointed Liaison Officer for the group in its contacts with London. No membership charge was to be made but a levy of 2 shillings on all those attending meetings would apply to defray the cost of the room hire. It was also decided to hold meetings every two months, on the third Saturday of the month in the odd months (i.e. January, March, May etc.) of the year. This practice has remained for the last twenty-five years and (with the exception of special meetings and events such as displays etc.) looks set to remain for the foreseeable future since it is considered a most satisfactory arrangement.

Phil Bennett had contacted the local newspaper *The Express and Star* who attended this first meeting, where members had assembled a large display of talking machines for the occasion.

Ernie Bayly, who had given much support to the project, attended this first meeting and stayed at the *Baron's Court Hotel* where his bill came to 65 shillings. The next day he and Phil visited Bill Pearson at his home (he was unable to attend the meeting) where he kept a very fine collection of machines and records.

Our current Chairman (in fact our only and very successful Chairman) Eddie Dunn was

the speaker at the second meeting in March and he gave a recital of male operatic singers on Pathé discs. He played these on an external horn Pathé machine, owned by Leon Cowlshaw. The sound was amplified with the aid of a microphone and a portable public address amplifier.

Geoff Howl (well known to members for his reports on our Group's activities in *Hillandale News*) had been unable to attend the first meeting but attended the second and he together with his brother, the late Ray Howl, became regular contributors to the group's activities.

The Group continued to grow and gained more members, resulting in an increased workload for Phil Bennett. A decision was taken to form a committee to enable the Group's activities to be efficiently organised. This committee, which consisted of a Chairman, Eddie Dunn; a secretary, Phil Bennett; a treasurer, Leon Cowlshaw, was elected in January 1969. A constitution was drawn up by Phil to regulate the formal aspects of the Group meetings. This constitution required accurate minutes to be kept. All information of the Group's activities before this time has been supplied mainly from Phil's memory, a few surviving documents and the *Hillandale News Midlands Mandrel* reports which were written by Phil. The minutes taken after the adoption of the constitution have provided a permanent record of the Group's activities and have provided much of the information in the following pages of this article.

It was also decided to keep an attendance record for all meetings. (This started with the meeting on 25th May 1968). These show that the average attendance at this time was around 15. Those who attended the first meeting so recorded were: Phil Bennett, Bob Duke, Phil Hobson, Ted Beestlestone, Jack Jarrett, Leon Cowlshaw, Eddie Dunn, Geoff Howl, Ray Howl, John Hobbs, John S. Dales, Jack Maloney and Dennis Norton. The regular attenders in-

cluded Gerry Lee (one of our veteran members). Many C.L.P.G.S. members from outside our area came along as guests.

Another group of C.L.P.G.S. members was soon meeting in Hereford (now the Severn Vale Group) resulting in a friendly regular exchange between our two groups. Traction engine rallies became a regular display ground for the Midlands Group. At one of these occasions Phil Bennett's Blue Amberol of *Rule Britannia*, electrically amplified, provided the musical accompaniment for the grand procession of the engines.

At the 1971 A.G.M. Leon Cowlshaw retired as Treasurer and was replaced by Roger Preston, in which position Roger still remains.

Phil Bennett had written several articles, during this period, for *Hillandale News* on the activities of the Group under the heading of *Midlands Mandrel*. Eddie Dunn assumed this task from May 16th 1970.

By 1971 there were indications (due to a change of licensee) that the *Giffard's Arms* would not remain available much longer and thus the Midlands Group meetings were moved to the Y.M.C.A., Westbury Street, Wolverhampton with effect from July 17th 1971.

By this time a regular pattern of speakers at meetings, who could be relied upon to provide informative and entertaining programmes, had emerged. These included Phil Bennett, our resident Jazz authority, whose programmes of 'real' (i.e. twenties) Jazz have remained a regular event; Eddie Dunn and Gerry Lee who have specialised on programmes of the 'operatic greats' and lesser known operatic artistes; Geoff and Ray Howl who established the popular annual event of a members' quiz (this continued after Ray's death with Geoff Howl and Wal Fowler. Geoff and Wal have also specialised in giving regular programmes of dance bands (both British and American)

and Music Hall artistes. Other members such as Roger Preston, John Dales and Ted Beetlestone also gave programmes.

Our Group's A.G.M.s are held in January and at the 1973 A.G.M. the programmes arranged for the new season show the variety of speakers: March - Ted Beetlestone, May - John Dales and Chris Williams, July - Phil Bennett (Jazz naturally), September - Roger Preston and November - The brothers Howl and their annual quiz. Chris Williams had been elected to the Committee on at the A.G.M. on January 25th 1972 after it was agreed to extend the Committee to four members.

Dennis Norton had, as will no doubt be remembered by many members, his own private museum which became a location for regular displays by the Midlands Group. It was these events for which the term *Phonofair* was coined.

The Society was already planning to commemorate the Centenary of Recorded Sound and at the Midlands group A.G.M. in 1977, following a request to the Secretary, discussions began on the Midlands group activities to celebrate this centenary. The Group mounted a three-week long exhibition in Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 1976 which was featured by BBC local radio. This was a trial run for the 1977 event.

In 1975 Geoff Howl took over the role of Reporter of the Midlands group activities, a position which he has fulfilled ever since.

At the 1976 A.G.M. on 17th January the Group decided to arrange a display for the Centenary of Recorded Sound celebrations at the Museum of Science and Industry, Birmingham. The author understands that the Museum contributed several items from their own collection to the display. These items have not been on public display since (it is a pity the Museum did not extend its talking machine exhibitions). Chris Williams resigned from the Committee at this meeting and Geoff Howl was elected to replace him.



The nature of the programmes underwent slight modification as may be witnessed in the list of presenters for the year: March, a Jazz Programme by Eddie Dunn; May, Ted Beetlestone on Famous Singers; July, a Members' Favourites Session; September, the Annual Quiz presented by the Howl brothers; November, A Cylinder Evening with John Dales and after the next A.G.M. Phil Bennett was to give a programme on Jazz.

1977 was a busy year. It included a lecture at Birmingham Art Gallery and Museum and a similar event with displays at Birmingham Museum of Science and Industry, which ran for two weeks in mid-September. Members from the Group also participated in a special programme broadcast by BBC Radio Birmingham.

1978 was the tenth anniversary of the Midlands Group and the Chairman in his annual report said that the group was gaining in members and that it looked to continue in a healthy state for the future. Since January 1977 the Group had met in the new Y.M.C.A. building in Dunstall Avenue, Wolverhampton. As the Y.M.C.A. was unavailable for the A.G.M. on the 21st of January the Group held its first meeting in Birmingham at *The Shakespeare Hotel* in Summer Row.

At the A.G.M. on 20th January 1979 Phil Bennett stood down as Secretary after continuous service since 1968. His recent marriage was the reason for this as he felt he would be unable to continue effectively with his responsibilities. He was accorded an unanimous vote of thanks for all the work he had done for the Group. Gerry Burton was elected to replace him. By 19th May the venue of the meetings had changed to the *Anchor Inn*, Holyhead Road, Wednesbury. This continued until 29th March 1980 when meetings moved to the G17 lounge of Aston University, Birmingham, a location which became the favourite of many members. Wal Fowler undertook the arrangements for several Midlands Group special events.

The March 1981 meeting took place at the Norton Museum to coincide with a special display there. The Arts centre, Gosta Green, Birmingham became the regular venue for meetings from 15th May 1981.

The Midlands Group entered the eighties well established. Despite a temporary decline in attendance rates, due partly to the changes of venue, the eighties continued with a growth in membership and activities. These will be described in more detail in Part Two.

To be continued.

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